

on which such chairman or chairmen, and such ranking minority member or members, approve such contract.

#### RULE 15.—SUPERVISION, DUTIES OF STAFF

(a) Supervision of Majority Staff.—The professional and clerical staff of the Committee not assigned to the minority shall be under the supervision and direction of the chairman who, in consultation with the chairmen of the subcommittees, shall establish and assign the duties and responsibilities of such staff members and delegate such authority as he determines appropriate.

(b) Supervision of Minority Staff.—The professional and clerical staff assigned to the minority shall be under the supervision and direction of the minority members of the Committee, who may delegate such authority as they determine appropriate.

#### RULE 16.—COMMITTEE BUDGET

(a) Preparation of Committee Budget.—The chairman of the Committee, after consultation with the ranking minority member of the Committee and the chairmen of the subcommittees, shall for the 110th Congress prepare a preliminary budget for the Committee, with such budget including necessary amounts for professional and clerical staff, travel, investigations, equipment and miscellaneous expenses of the Committee and the subcommittees, and which shall be adequate to fully discharge the Committee's responsibilities for legislation and oversight. Such budget shall be presented by the chairman to the majority party caucus of the Committee and thereafter to the full Committee for its approval.

(b) Approval of the Committee Budget.—The chairman shall take whatever action is necessary to have the budget as finally approved by the Committee duly authorized by the House. No proposed Committee budget may be submitted to the Committee on House Administration unless it has been presented to and approved by the majority party caucus and thereafter by the full Committee. The chairman of the Committee may authorize all necessary expenses in accordance with these rules and within the limits of the Committee's budget as approved by the House.

(c) Monthly Expenditures Report.—Committee members shall be furnished a copy of each monthly report, prepared by the chairman for the Committee on House Administration, which shows expenditures made during the reporting period and cumulative for the year by the Committee and subcommittees, anticipated expenditures for the projected Committee program, and detailed information on travel.

#### RULE 17.—BROADCASTING OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Any meeting or hearing that is open to the public may be covered in whole or in part by radio or television or still photography, subject to the requirements of clause 4 of Rule XI of the Rules of the House. The coverage of any hearing or other proceeding of the Committee or any subcommittee thereof by television, radio, or still photography shall be under the direct supervision of the chairman of the Committee, the subcommittee chairman, or other member of the Committee presiding at such hearing or other proceeding and may be terminated by such member in accordance with the Rules of the House.

#### RULE 18.—COMPTROLLER GENERAL AUDITS

The chairman of the Committee is authorized to request verification examinations by the Comptroller General of the United States pursuant to Title V, Part A of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (Public Law 94-163), after consultation with the members of the Committee.

#### RULE 19.—SUBPOENAS

The Committee, or any subcommittee, may authorize and issue a subpoena under clause 2(m)(2)(A) of Rule XI of the House, if authorized by a majority of the members of the Committee or subcommittee (as the case may be) voting, a quorum being present. Authorized subpoenas may be issued over the signature of the chairman of the Committee or any member designated by the Committee, and may be served by any person designated by such chairman or member. The chairman of the Committee may authorize and issue subpoenas under such clause during any period for which the House has adjourned for a period in excess of 3 days when, in the opinion of the chairman, authorization and issuance of the subpoena is necessary to obtain the material set forth in the subpoena. The chairman shall report to the members of the Committee on the authorization and issuance of a subpoena during the recess period as soon as practicable but in no event later than one week after service of such subpoena.

#### RULE 20.—TRAVEL OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

(a) Approval of Travel.—Consistent with the primary expense resolution and such additional expense resolutions as may have been approved, travel to be reimbursed from funds set aside for the Committee for any member or any staff member shall be paid only upon the prior authorization of the chairman. Travel may be authorized by the chairman for any member and any staff member in connection with the attendance of hearings conducted by the Committee or any subcommittee thereof and meetings, conferences, and investigations which involve activities or subject matter under the general jurisdiction of the Committee. Before such authorization is given there shall be submitted to the chairman in writing the following: (1) the purpose of the travel; (2) the dates during which the travel is to be made and the date or dates of the event for which the travel is being made; (3) the location of the event for which the travel is to be made; and (4) the names of members and staff seeking authorization.

(b) Approval of Travel by Minority Members and Staff.—In the case of travel by minority party members and minority party professional staff for the purpose set out in (a), the prior approval, not only of the chairman but also of the ranking minority member, shall be required. Such prior authorization shall be given by the chairman only upon the representation by the ranking minority member in writing setting forth those items enumerated in (1), (2), (3), and (4) of paragraph (a).

#### BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, this evening, as most Tuesday evenings, I'm joined by members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition as we come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives to talk about the debt and the deficit and what that means for the future of this country and how so many of today's priorities continue to go unmet because of this.

Today's national debt is \$9,169,206,830,867 and some change. For

every man, woman and child in America, their share of the national debt, \$30,205.

As you walk the halls of Congress, Madam Speaker, as you walk the halls of the Cannon, Longworth and Rayburn House Office Buildings, you will easily know when you're walking by the door of a fellow Blue Dog member because you will see this poster that reminds us of the national debt, as well as your share.

This evening we want to talk about PAYGO. It's an acronym for pay-as-you-go, and basically there was a lot made to do about the first 100 legislative hours in this new Democratic majority. Well, the 47 of us in the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition were proud of what we were able to accomplish in this first legislative hour under this new Democratic majority, and that was reinstating the PAYGO rules, which means pay-as-you-go. If you have got a new program you want to fund, you've got to show us how you're going to pay for it. If you want to cut a tax, you've got to show us how you're going to pay for it.

The business of borrowing money from China to fund programs and tax cuts in this country are over, and we want to thank the new Democratic leadership for their commitment, their commitment not to bring a bill to this floor that's not paid for.

At this time to talk more about this issue and a lot of talk about AMT, the alternative minimum tax is going to touch a lot more people this year. We want to protect those people. We want to make sure they're not taxed, but we also want to make sure that that bill that comes to this floor is paid for. It doesn't make sense to protect people from taxes if we're simply borrowing the money from China and then asking our children and grandchildren to foot the bill.

That's why I was very disappointed last week when the Senate voted 88-5 to fix the AMT. They took the easy way out. It wasn't paid for. The Senate's plan borrows \$50 billion just for this year, \$50 billion from China to pay for a fix to the alternative minimum tax. We have a plan in the House not only to fix it but to pay for it, and we voted for that a couple of weeks ago on the House floor and we're going to vote on it again this week.

And to talk more about this and what it all means for this country and for future generations is one of the founders of the Blue Dog Coalition, my friend, JOHN TANNER from Tennessee.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, thank you very much, and I will be brief because we have a lot of Blue Dogs here tonight that are going to speak to this issue, and they will elaborate on what I have to say.

The PAYGO rule, as we have here now as Mr. ROSS pointed out, is basically what all of us do in our private lives. We live within our means. We pay our bills, and we hope we have some left to invest in the future. This

government has done none of that. And some people around here have argued about the AMT situation that you alluded to, that we don't have to pay for that because it wasn't intended to affect these people; therefore, it doesn't exist. If I said that in Tennessee, they would say that fellow's been in Washington too long. Only in Washington would somebody even dare make a statement as ludicrous as that is.

We've also heard people here in this town say deficits don't matter. Well, if deficits don't matter, why don't we abolish the tax code and just borrow what we need? Of course deficits matter; they matter to all of us.

Some people around here think the laws of arithmetic stop at the steps of the Capitol and the front door of the White House. Well, they don't, and this is why.

As we are plunging this country into debt that's been done on a massive scale in the last 6 years, that no political leadership in the history of this country has gone there, we are transferring more and more of our assets to foreign-held powers. We transferred over \$700 billion in the form of interest payments overseas just in the last 72 months.

They talk about, well, we don't have to pay for this because we didn't intend it. Somebody's going to pay for it. There's no free lunch. People have been looking for a free lunch since the dawn of civilization. It does not exist, and I would contend that if we are going to keep our moral authority to govern as stewards of this country, then the time and place where we are now, elected to public office, if we do not reverse this and start paying our bills, we will undermine, I believe, that and we'll also undermine this country.

I think this is a defining moment for us, and we're going to fight. Davy Crockett was from my district. We're going to make this an Alamo-type situation around this issue because this is a critical tool of this Congress and the American people in order to act financially and responsibly.

I can't thank the Blue Dogs enough for their devotion to this idea of we're going to leave this place better than when we found it, and that's what this is all about.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee, a founder of the Blue Dog Coalition, JOHN TANNER, for joining us this evening for this Special Order.

Madam Speaker, there's 47 of us in the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. The Blue Dog Coalition is just another name for fiscally conservative Democrats, and one of our newest members who has joined us for the 110th session of Congress, and we're just delighted to have her, is our friend KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND from New York's 20th district.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman ROSS.

For the sake of our children's future, I'm strongly urging the Senate to en-

sure that the AMT patch that we're going to be considering this week complies with the PAYGO rules. The House has already passed a responsible AMT bill, which will prevent 23 million taxpayers from being hit by the AMT, while also finding appropriate offsets so that the national debt will not be increased.

I have introduced a resolution, H.J. Res. 45, which is a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. If my constituents in upstate New York have to balance their checkbook every month, so should the Federal Government.

The AMT affected 4.2 million Americans last year. If Congress does not act, it will affect 23 million Americans this year, most of them middle-class families.

In my district, 66,000 families will be affected if this bill is not passed. Almost half of the 23 million taxpayers that will be affected are married with children. The average AMT taxpayer will owe over \$6,000 in additional taxes. Small business owners are going to be one of the hardest hit by the AMT.

The reason why we have to pay for this and ensure we follow pay-as-you-go standards is because America's debt is over \$9 trillion. Our Federal debt increases by \$1.4 billion a day, at an astonishing rate of \$1 million a minute. Our national debt is equal to over \$30,000 for every man, woman and child and infant in this country.

The Federal Government spent over \$400 billion last year on interest payments on the national debt. After Social Security, Medicare and defense spending, interest payments on the debt are the third largest expenditure by the Federal Government. The amount of money that we spend on interest payments will decrease the amount of money America will have in the future for spending on our national priorities such as health care, education, energy independence, our troops.

Lowering the debt is essential not only for our economic security, but it is essential for our national security. Foreign governments and investors now hold \$2.2 trillion, which is 44 percent of all publicly held U.S. debt. That's up nearly 10 percent from last year. China owns the second-most amount of our debt, and oil exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia account for the fourth-most held U.S. debt.

Paying for AMT is possible. The House has already passed in a bipartisan way a PAYGO-compliant bill. For future generations, we must be responsible and not add to the national debt.

Just to give folks at home an understanding of what this money means, let me just give you a couple of translations. This year we paid \$239 billion in interest on the national debt. That same amount of money, if we use it for other purposes, would literally pay for every U.S. family's refrigerator to be stocked for 7 months. It would pay for filling every U.S. family's gas tank for

10 months at today's gas prices. It would pay for providing 4 years of in-state public tuition for 10 million students, and it would pay 1 year's salary for 8 million new teachers.

The Federal Government has sent over \$709 billion abroad in the form of interest payments since President Bush took office, \$155 billion in 2007 alone. The same amount would fund any of the following: 12,000 new elementary schools, 7,000 new veterans clinics, and all road and bridge construction and improvements for the next 10 years.

I beseech the Senate to follow a fiscal, responsible and prudent course of action and pay for the AMT.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York. For those just joining us, to set the stage, Madam Speaker, the Senate, we sent the Senate an AMT fix, alternative minimum tax fix, to ensure people didn't get hit with this unfair tax, and we paid for it. They sent it back to us without being paid for. Instead, they want to borrow \$50 billion from China, and that's what got 47 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition worked up, and for a good reason.

I'm pleased to be joined by a fellow Blue Dog member from California's 20th Congressional District, my friend JIM COSTA.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss the importance of this pay-as-you-go system that my colleague from Arkansas, Congressman ROSS, and my other colleagues have spoken on thus far.

What you're going to hear this evening across the breadth and width of Representatives from throughout the country is a common and reoccurring theme, and that is, as Blue Dogs, we believe that putting our fiscal House in order is among the highest of priorities that we are sent here back to Washington to do. And so, therefore, it is a very important discussion that we are having with you this evening, as many Americans sit at their home having dinner and wondering just really what's going on in Washington.

What's going on is really trying to draw a line in the sand. Are we about trying to establish and stay with fiscal responsibility or not?

Now, PAYGO is a tool, as was mentioned, to try to ensure that any additional expenditures of our Federal budget be paid for. That's not the only tool, but it is one of the few tools that we now have in place. Certainly as Blue Dog members, we are looking and trying to figure out how we can do other efforts to focus on budget cutting and reestablishing our priorities. But right now pay-as-you-go is the most important tool that we have available to us.

Now, let me give you a little history of how all this took place. In 1990, when the Budget Enforcement Act was passed, there was an attempt to reign in deficits that had occurred for over 30 years, Federal deficits that had been

experienced since 1970. This Act, passed by a Democratic Congress in 1990 and signed by a Republican President, President George Bush the First, sought to control the budgetary impact of legislation through the enforcement of the provisions that we now refer to as pay-as-you-go.

Now, that was law and that was enforced for 10 years, about. Then in 2001, with a new Republican majority in Congress, our current President, President George Bush the Second, abandoned the PAYGO provisions.

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And that, I think, among other factors took our projected budget surplus, then at \$5.6 trillion over a 10-year period, and created the current budget deficit that we have today, which is over \$2 trillion over that same time period. Yes, I think it's disappointing for all Americans that a sensible tax policy, an investment in smart growth in our country that was achieved between 1990 and 2001 on a bipartisan basis, has been squandered in the last 6 years to the large unsustainable deficit that we have today.

Now, where are we? Well, at the beginning of this year, the new Democratic majority returned to Congress a path of fiscal responsibility. As Congressman ROSS and others mentioned, PAYGO was one of the first provisions we enacted. Under these rules we have in every piece of legislation that we have acted on this year enforced the PAYGO principle. This promise we made to the American people we intend to keep true to our word. We have already made great strides in bringing our fiscal house in order; but if we want to continue that, we must include this with all legislation, which includes the alternative minimum tax. It needs to comply with PAYGO.

Currently, our national debt is over \$9 trillion, with much of it being held by foreign governments. In 2007, China alone had increased the holdings of U.S. Treasury securities by nearly 500 percent in the last 6 years, from \$74 billion in July, 2001, to \$408 billion in July of this year. Overall, and it has been said before, this administration has borrowed more money from foreign sources throughout the world than the previous 42 Presidents combined. Let me repeat that: overall, this administration has borrowed more money from foreign sources than all the previous 42 Presidents combined.

As a proud member of the Blue Dog Caucus, I strongly believe that fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets are essential to make our economy and our country strong and prosperous. Government should not be allowed to spend more than it takes in. Common sense tells us that. Any strategy of our Nation's budget must include a strategy for reducing these record deficits so that we don't pass them on to our children. Without adequate controls, prolonged deficit spending will weaken our ability to fund worthwhile domestic

spending programs and jeopardize our national security. That's at the heart of this discussion.

I further believe that it's fiscally and morally irresponsible, therefore, to place the burden of today's deficit on our children and grandchildren. And that's why PAYGO is so important, that we draw the line and make this fight this week.

The alternative minimum tax is important. We passed that relief on that over a week ago. But it's not worth borrowing from China to pay for the alternative minimum tax. We can do this in a commonsense way, and that's what the Blue Dogs are asking you to support our efforts in.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California for joining us.

And, Madam Speaker, this is a Special Order hosted by the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. And at this time, as we discuss this PAYGO and AMT issue deeper and further and put it in context, I'd like to call on a former co-Chair of the Blue Dog Coalition, BARON HILL from Indiana.

Mr. HILL. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of Blue Dogs here this evening to talk about this issue because Blue Dogs feel very passionate about PAYGO rules and our national debt. The national debt exceeds over \$9 trillion. One of the largest expenditures in our Nation's budget, second or third only to military spending, is the interest that we pay on that national debt.

Now, we are at a critical time because now we are at a stage of the legislative process where the rubber meets the road. As has already been mentioned here, there is a large issue looming next year for millions of Americans, and that issue is the alternative minimum tax. The alternative minimum tax was passed many years ago with the idea that only the wealthy who didn't pay any income taxes ought not to have that advantage, and so the alternative minimum tax was put in place. Little did we know when it was passed many years ago that we would advance up to 2007, which is the present time, and we would find that next year when people have to pay their income taxes, they will learn that many middle-class Americans will have to pay this tax as well.

So not only the wealthy will have to pay the alternative minimum tax but also many millions of middle-class people will have to pay the AMT. We need to fix that. And the Blue Dogs are committed to making sure that we provide tax relief for those millions of middle-class Americans who are going to be hit with this tax next year.

But this is where the rubber meets the road, because by giving millions of middle-class Americans tax relief, it's going to cost more than \$50 billion. We have got to figure out a way to pay for that because in this House, we have pay-as-you-go rules, which simply

means that if we are going to cut taxes or we are going to increase spending, we have got to figure out a way to pay for it. The many Blue Dogs here this evening are here passionately to make sure that we hold our ground because a storm is brewing here, Madam Speaker.

By passing this new alternative minimum tax, there are those in this Chamber and those in the other Chamber who do not want to pay for it. And the Blue Dogs stand before you today in front of America to make sure that we have the political courage to pay for this tax relief for millions of Americans in this country. Because if we don't do this, that \$9 trillion that we are already in debt increases to \$10 trillion and \$11 trillion and then \$12 trillion, and it goes on and on and on and on.

There are those in this body and the other who don't believe that this is an important enough issue and therefore we should ignore the PAYGO rules. That's the storm that is brewing in the next couple of days. And the Blue Dogs stand before the American people to say that we are still going to fight the battle of making sure that we restore fiscal discipline to this body. And that's the reason why so many passionate Blue Dogs are here this evening, because that storm is brewing. The time is ticking away. The threat of exceeding our expenditures over what we take in from income is at a threshold. And that's the reason why so many Blue Dog Democrats are here to talk about it this evening. And I hope the American people are listening.

To put it in perspective and why these rules are so important to be in place, it's important to note that since President Bush took office, the gross national debt has increased by \$3.427 trillion. And since President Bush took office, we have borrowed \$1.2 trillion from foreign sources. We've got to stop this madness.

Now, there are those in this body and outside this body, certain newspapers that consider themselves conservative newspapers like the Wall Street Journal, who believe that this issue is not important, that the Blue Dogs are wrong on this. We are not wrong on this. We have got to stop this madness, and we have to implement those PAYGO rules. It worked in the 1990s up until 2002 when we actually reversed our Nation's budget deficits and had surpluses. And it was because we stuck to the very rules that we are talking about tonight. And if we don't stick by these rules, then the days of deficit spending are going to return.

When the Democrats took over control of Congress in last year's elections, we promised to implement these PAYGO rules and stop the madness of these huge deficits that we had in place. And now we're on the verge of breaking the very rules that we put in place, and that is the reason why the Blue Dogs stand before you this evening.

I am proud to be a Blue Dog. I'm proud that the Blue Dogs have pushed

this issue to restore fiscal sanity to our Nation's budget. And I think it's the reason why we have so many that are about to speak about it.

I give the gentleman from Arkansas my appreciation for allowing me to speak on this very important issue.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) for his insight on this issue.

Madam Speaker, let me make it clear that the Blue Dog Coalition wants to ensure that no additional taxpayers are liable for the AMT tax this year. Let me also make it clear that, unlike the Senate, we want a bill that's paid for. We don't want to simply borrow the money from China to fund a tax cut or to provide tax relief in this country. And that's what makes us different in this new Democratic majority from what we had in the previous Congresses under the Republican control. They have given us the largest debt ever, the largest deficit ever; and the time has come to put an end to that. And someone that understands that better than anyone is the Blue Dog co-Chair for policy, my friend DENNIS MOORE from Kansas.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Thank you, Congressman ROSS, for the time this evening to speak to the American people about what's happening in our country with our deficit, with our debt, and what we need to do to correct this problem for future generations in our country.

You've heard several speakers talk tonight about the debt that our Nation has accumulated, \$9.1 trillion. That's gone up almost \$3.4 trillion in the past 6 years since President Bush took office.

As policy co-Chair, I had an opportunity to go with about eight other Democrats to the White House to meet with the President a few months ago. We each had 2 minutes to speak. And when it was my turn, I said, Mr. President, I'm a year older than you are. I had 7½ grandchildren at the time, eight now, and I said, Mr. President, we have mortgaged their future. I said, We've got to start living like most American families living within a budget. This should not be about Democrats and Republicans. We have got to be responsible. It's our moral duty to our kids and grandkids.

And he looked at me and he said, You've got a point.

Well, I know I have a point, but we need to work on this together. That's what we are all saying here tonight is we have mortgaged the future of our children and grandchildren, and that's absolutely the wrong thing to do.

In the first days of this new Congress this year, Congress, at least the House, passed a pay-as-you-go rule and reinstated a rule that expired in 2002. And for several years without that rule, our deficit and our debt rose dramatically. That's why all of us, the 47 Blue Dog Democrats here, think it is so important that we reinstate that rule, and it has been reinstated now, but that we

follow this rule and make sure that we don't spend more money as a Nation than we take in; that we live within our means like most American families do.

You've been told by other speakers here tonight that China, Japan, and other foreign nations own more than \$1 trillion of United States debt. That is a disgrace. It's something that we have got to change. We can't afford to let other nations make important decisions about our future. It's our future. It belongs to future generations in this country. And we have got to make sure that we are in control and not other nations in this world.

And I will just stop by saying this: PAYGO sounds funny. All it is, is pay-as-you-go. If you have a new spending proposal, a new program proposal, or a tax cut, section 1 is here is my proposal and section 2 is here's how it's paid for so it's revenue neutral, doesn't add to our deficit or our debt.

Again, Madam Speaker, we need to start living like most American families do within a budget. It's the right thing to do for our country, and it's certainly the right thing to do for future generations in our country.

Thank you, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from Kansas for joining us.

Madam Speaker, in the next 35 minutes, we've got a number of Blue Dogs, fiscally conservative Democrats, that have taken to the floor of the House tonight to join me in talking about the importance of PAYGO, pay-as-you-go, the kind of principle that was in place in this Chamber when President Clinton gave us the first balanced budget of any Democrat or Republican in about 40 years.

At this time I would like to call on a former co-Chair of the Blue Dogs from the State of Tennessee, someone that has helped lead this effort and who brings a lot of insight to this issue, the former co-Chair for policy of the Blue Dogs, and that's my friend JIM COOPER from Tennessee.

Mr. COOPER. I thank my friend from Arkansas for yielding, and I will be very brief.

This PAYGO principle is fundamental to good government. All it means is that you pay as you go, you pay your bills. That's what this Congress should do, just as every American family knows that they should pay their bills. It's a fundamental principle. We cannot afford to let this principle lapse. It was in place from 1990 to 2002. That was the period of the greatest economic expansion in American history, under the Clinton administration.

Unfortunately, the Republican majority in this House allowed PAYGO to lapse. But none other than Alan Greenspan, the former head of the Federal Reserve, has said that this is the single most important reform that this Congress could undertake to address fiscal discipline.

So I support my colleagues in supporting PAYGO. We have got to make

this principle stand. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee, former co-Chair of the Blue Dogs, for joining us and in being a part of standing firm on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of PAYGO.

Some people may say, what's this business all about? Well, the House passed a bill to provide tax relief for millions of people, and it was paid for. We sent it to the Senate and they didn't like it; so they sent it back unpaid for. Their idea was to borrow \$50 billion from someplace like China to pay for it.

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Well, we're going to send it back again, probably tomorrow, Madam Speaker, with another pay-for. And some people are maybe saying, "Huh? So how are you going to pay for it?" Well, it's not glamorous, but it makes sense to me. We're going to pay for it by closing loopholes allowing hedge fund managers to defer compensation in offshore accounts. There's no reason why the Senate shouldn't be able to join us in supporting that. It pays for it instead of borrowing the money from China and provides the tax relief that we need for middle-class working families all across this country.

I would like to call on a former co-chair for communications of the Blue Dogs, my friend from California, a member of the Rules Committee, very involved in this whole issue, and that's DENNIS CARDOZA.

Mr. CARDOZA. I would like to thank the chairman for recognizing me and yielding to me. I also want to thank Mr. ROSS for being such a leader on this issue and for being a leader on so many of the Blue Dog causes that he brings to the floor every week. And there is no question, Mr. ROSS, that there is no issue that's more important to the Blue Dogs than this issue of PAYGO.

Madam Speaker, passing PAYGO rules at the beginning of the 110th Congress fulfilled an absolute pledge to the American people that this new Congress was going to spend taxpayers' dollars and money responsibly and without continuing to run up the deficit. It was a very important initial step when we passed the House rules this year. Waiving this rule now would break that pledge to pay for the alternative minimum tax and would be a rollback in what we've committed to do for the American people. And I believe that breaking the PAYGO rules would return us to the disastrous fiscal policies of the past Congresses under the Republican administration of this House and would be a terrible mistake.

After allowing the PAYGO rules to expire, the Republicans enacted legislation increasing the national debt by nearly \$1.4 trillion over 6 years. Twenty-one percent of all individual income taxes of the year 2008 will go towards paying the interest on the national

debt. They won't help cure a sick child, they won't help educate one of our bright young people in this country, your tax dollars, 21 percent of which will go strictly to pay interest on the \$9 trillion that have been run up in the national debt.

This "debt tax," as we call it, is a direct consequence of the reckless fiscal policies that have happened, for the most part, over the last 6 years. The President and the Republican majority have put us on a fiscally unsustainable path, and the Blue Dogs are unwilling to pass this undue burden onto future generations of Americans.

The Blue Dogs demanded a new rule, as we talked about earlier, that put PAYGO back into place. And when we took over the Congress, the Democrats restored the PAYGO rules to ensure that the government spends within its means, just like American families have to do.

In complying with the PAYGO rules, this House has overwhelmingly relied on spending cuts to offset increases in higher priority programs. Over 80 percent of the increases in spending for priority programs passed by this House have been offset by cuts in lower priority or wasteful spending programs.

The Blue Dogs are committed to addressing this country's long-term fiscal challenges, and that is why we have insisted that PAYGO rules be applied to all mandatory spending increases.

This Democratic Congress has made great strides to get our fiscal house back in order. If we want to continue down this path towards fiscal sanity, we must ensure that every piece of legislation we consider, including the AMT bill that we're going to be considering this week, comply with the PAYGO rules.

Mr. Chairman, again, I very much appreciate your leadership, and I thank you for recognizing me and yielding me time.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California, who has contributed greatly as the former cochair of the Blue Dogs and now a member of the Rules Committee.

The reason all of this is so important is because of this: Today, the U.S. national debt, \$9,169,206,830,867, you divide that by every man, woman and child in America, and your share, Madam Speaker, is \$30,205.

Since President Bush took office, the gross national debt has increased by nearly \$3.5 trillion, \$3.427 trillion. That's \$41.54 billion per month. That's \$9.57 billion per week. That's \$1.37 billion per day. That's \$56.93 million per hour. That's \$948,907 per minute. And that's \$15,815 per second. Any way you divide it out, Madam Speaker, for a country boy from south Arkansas, that's a whole lot of money. And this group, the Blue Dogs, fiscally conservative Democrats, are trying to restore common sense, accountability, and fiscal discipline to our national government. And right in the middle of it all is my friend from Louisiana, a fellow Blue Dog member, CHARLIE MELANCON.

Mr. MELANCON. I want to thank you, Congressman Ross, for reserving this time. And I would like to thank the leadership, Madam Speaker, for taking the initiative to reinstate the PAYGO rules.

As has been stated previously by my counterparts, my colleagues and the Blue Dogs, this is one element of government that we need to adhere to. It's shameful that the government hasn't been doing this all along. As stated earlier, we have a debt that far exceeds all 42 previous administrations collectively. That does not bode well for this country.

We were a strong Nation prior to World War II. We have been a strong Nation for centuries. But as you look at the devaluation of the dollar, the fact that China controls a large portion of our debt, that they, at one point in time last January, considered selling off some of their treasury notes, but were fearful that they may devalue the American dollar, thus lowering their value of their investments, that tells you something. And now that the dollar is sliding, China is reconsidering that.

And where does that put us? That puts us really in a trick bag. We are facing a comparative value of dollars, or currencies. Canada has passed us up. The Euro is far and away. The British pound is far exceeding the value that the average American can even afford to think about going to Europe to visit.

You know, I grew up in south Louisiana in a conservative household, in a conservative community for that matter, but one of the things that we were taught by our parents in our household was if you don't have it, you can't spend it. And even if you get a credit card, you've still got to pay for it someday. And that's basically what the Blue Dogs are about, trying to bring some fiscal responsibility to our government. Regardless of what party you're in, this is about our future.

Now, up until recently I was not a grandfather, but now I am. Before, when I ran for the Congress in my late fifties, I wasn't running for the Congress as a career, I wasn't running for the Congress to make a career later, I was coming to the Congress that the people so decided to try and help right this government and do what's right by the people of this country. The frustration is that you can't have it both ways. And the both ways is you can't help the people back home that need the help, whether it's building schools, whether it's building, in our case, levees, building highways and roads and bridges, educating the kids, doing cancer research. These things cost money. And without the involvement of our government, we wouldn't be the most advanced country that we are today. But we're moving down a slippery slope. We have spent ourselves into a debt that is estimated to be in excess of \$9 trillion, \$30,000 plus for every man, woman and child. So, that means

my two kids and their spouses and my grandson have a debt that will take them quite a bit of time if they were to decide, well, I want to pay my share, take them quite a bit of their lifetime to put that money aside. And that money that they would put aside would be better served to educate my grandson, for them to build a house when the time comes, for them to be able to afford to do things, to live a quality of life that all Americans would love to and expect to have.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today with my colleagues, the Blue Dogs, and worry about the people of this country. That's what we were sent here to do, worry about their welfare, worry about their well-being, and to take action that illustrates that we do care about them and this country. And by not adhering to the PAYGO rule, by not finding the pay-fors in these pieces of legislation, we endanger the future of all citizens of this country.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana. And as our friend JOHN TANNER from Tennessee has said so eloquently, this administration, this President has borrowed more money from foreigners than the previous 42 Presidents combined.

Since President Bush took office, our Nation has borrowed \$1.23 trillion from foreign sources. That's a big number. Let's break it down. That's \$15.45 billion per month. That's \$3.54 billion per week. That's \$505.6 million per day. That's \$21.07 million per hour. That's \$351,113 per minute. And that's \$5,852 per second.

So, Madam Speaker, that's why we're here. We want to restore common sense and fiscal discipline to our national government. We want to put an end to this reckless spending and this debt and this deficit, and to help us do that is my friend from Ohio, new member of the Blue Dogs, serving his first term in the 110th session of Congress, ZACK SPACE from Ohio's 18th congressional district.

Mr. SPACE. I thank my friend from Arkansas.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to be a part of this group that places such a high priority on fiscal responsibility, the Blue Dogs.

I really believe that we live in a crossroads of history and that there are several seminal issues of our day that in and of themselves would be considered the seminal issue of virtually any other era, whether you're talking about the war in Iraq, the war on terror, the challenges posed by globalization, the challenges facing our environment, all very important issues, and indeed, seminal. But yet another seminal issue, one which is much more insidious and not so readily identifiable, but nonetheless serious, is that posed by our national debt. \$9.17 trillion, a number that by any account is virtually incomprehensible; \$236 billion a year being paid in interest on that debt. I have not done the math, but I suspect that if you broke that

down for every one of the 435 congressional districts in our country, you would find that each Member of Congress, each congressional district could use several hundred million dollars a year from that figure to build roads, repair bridges, cure diseases, educate children and do the kinds of things that make us a strong Nation.

This debt is sapping us of vital resources, and it is, in the words of my colleague earlier today, the gentleman from Tennessee, one of our leaders, JOHN TANNER, making us a weaker Nation.

PAYGO, a simple concept, one that, again, my colleague from Tennessee referenced as something we expect of our government in the same way that we expect it from our families, live within our means. The alternative minimum tax is poised to draw in 23 million Americans who were never intended to be the victims of that tax. We need to fix it. We must fix it. This House has voted to fix it in a fiscally responsible way, in a way that is paid for.

Now, the Blue Dogs stand for the proposition that we stand behind that and that we don't irresponsibly fix the tax, we do it in a responsible fashion. Back home in Ohio's 18th District, in towns like Chillicothe and Zanesville and New Philadelphia, Ohio, we can't understand what \$9.1 trillion is. I certainly don't get it. It's incomprehensible. But we do understand the need, the pressing need of this Nation to once again engage in fiscal responsibility, acting in a way that we expect our citizens to act.

And with that, I am very proud to be a member of this organization and will continue to stand behind that basic and fundamental principle of fiscal responsibility.

□ 2030

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his insight.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Indiana, BRAD ELLSWORTH, from Indiana's Eighth Congressional District. A new member of the Blue Dogs in the 110th session of Congress, BRAD ELLSWORTH.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. I appreciate the gentleman from Arkansas recognizing me, Madam Speaker.

It is an honor to follow my good friend from Ohio in his eloquent words about what we are here to talk about tonight. When I ran for Congress, the good people of the Eighth District of Indiana sent me and gave a message. I heard that message loud and clear, that they wanted me to come, if they would hire me to come and do my part to get the House's fiscal orders back in shape.

When I came to Congress a year ago in January, I started looking for people that thought the same way I did, that pay-as-you-go was just a natural thing. And I found a group called the Blue Dogs. Now, I have got to admit I didn't

know what a Blue Dog was. And I would venture to guess that most of the people in Indiana didn't know what a Blue Dog was. But I know now. And it is a group that I am proud to associate myself with.

I have got to tell you, Madam Speaker, that the folks back in the Eighth District in Indiana in Terre Haute, Greencastle, and Evansville probably feel like they are being choked blue now. That is how the Blue Dogs got their name. They were being choked blue. And the people of our country are being choked blue by our constant running up the debt and deficit in this country.

One thing I learned as a little kid growing up in school was you say what you are going to do, and then you do what you say you are going to do. And that includes everybody in this House, the 435 Members. People like to complain about their taxes. They like to complain about this debt, and they have a right to. But what they do know is they expect government services, and they expect us to spend their money wisely. And so they know that when they want to drive on our Federal highways, and they know that when they call, they want our homeland protected by border security. So when they hear about government contracts gone bad, military spending, that waste, fraud and abuse accounts up to \$88 billion in a few investigations, they get a little weary of that, and so do I.

We can't run this House like this. We wouldn't run our personal homes like this, we wouldn't run a personal business like this, and we can't run the people's House like this. We have done some good in this House. We passed the PAYGO legislation, one of the first things we did in the first week of this 110th Congress. We have cut earmarks in half. We have closed tax loopholes. But it is not enough.

Congressman ROSS, the poster you show when you speak has gone up since I came into this office and displayed my poster. It was \$29,000 per person for every man, woman and child in this country when we started, and now it is 30, even though we have done some good. So we can't relax now until we start chipping away piece by piece, chunk by chunk and bring that back down so that we are not strapping every man, woman and child in this country with now a \$30,000 debt.

It is imperative that we continue to observe the PAYGO rules of this House. And when and only when we do that will we see this number start going in the reverse and get our affairs back in order.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Indiana. Madam Speaker, if you have any questions, comments or concerns you can e-mail us, Madam Speaker, at [bluedog@mail.house.gov](mailto:bluedog@mail.house.gov).

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SPACE) was saying that he didn't have his calculator with him, but he knew it was a lot of interest that had been paid. This year we have paid \$239 bil-

lion in interest on the national debt. That is close to \$1 billion a day, without a calculator. But with a calculator, and to put it in perspective, the same amount we would pay for any of the following, stocking every family in America's refrigerator for 7 months, filling every U.S. gas tank, and that is not easy to do this these days, for 10 months, filling every American's gas tank for 10 months at today's gas prices, providing 4 years of in-state public tuition for 10.2 million students. I have a daughter in college now. I can appreciate that one. Paying 1 year of salary for 8 million new teachers. We could do any one of those things, Madam Speaker, with the amount of interest we have paid on the national debt this year.

The whole point here, Madam Speaker, is we will continue, this demonstrates it right here, the reds, the amounts we are spending on interest, the light blue, or the turquoise as we would say back home, is the amount we are spending on education. The dark green is how much we are spending on veterans. And the purple is how much we are spending on homeland security.

America's priorities, Madam Speaker, are out of whack. And they are going to remain out of whack until we get our fiscal house in order. And no one understands this better than the leader of the Blue Dogs, the administrative co-Chair for the Blue Dogs who spends a lot of time on these issues, and I can't thank him enough for being here and waiting patiently all night and letting all our fellow Blue Dog members go, we have had a dozen tonight, that is a lot, to come to the floor of the House tonight to talk about these issues. We have about 10 minutes left. The gentleman from Florida, ALLEN BOYD, can have as much of it as he wants.

Mr. BOYD of Florida. I thank my friend, Madam Speaker, for yielding, and it is a great privilege to join my Blue Dog colleagues here on the House floor to talk about these issues that are of such great import to the American people and to the children of America today, because they are the ones who will be, in the end, mostly affected by these policies that we are having great debates about today.

Now, my fellow Blue Dog colleagues have spoken very eloquently and succinctly about PAYGO, what it is, how it got started, how it works, and the importance of it. Just in brief summary, I will remind our viewers that PAYGO was a principle that was first put in place in 1990 by then-President George H.W. Bush, commonly referred to around these parts of the country as Bush 41.

With a Democratic Congress and Republican administration, they began to realize the misguided policy of deficits, large annual deficits, so they did something about it. After the election in 1992, when President Clinton became President, and then in 1994, the Republican revolution where you had a



Democratic President and Republican-led Congress, in 1997, those principles of PAYGO were continued in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

In 1999, we saw for the first time in 30 years a balanced budget. And we could see surpluses, Madam Speaker, as far as the eye could see. It looked great for America at that point in time. We had money to deal with national security. We had money to fix the problems that we know exist in Medicare and Social Security, the long-term problems, which are so important. Those two programs are so important to the future of this country.

What happened? In 2001, we got a new President, President George W. Bush, commonly known in these circles as Bush 43. And this administration, along with the Congress back then, decided that PAYGO wasn't a good idea because they couldn't do the policies of their tax cuts they wanted, as much as they wanted to do and live within those rules of PAYGO, so they abandoned the PAYGO rule, the PAYGO principle.

As a result, from 2000 to today, 2007, you have had a swing of several trillion dollars in terms of the surpluses versus the deficit. So we are in a bad situation. We are in a bad situation; and during the campaigns last year, people running for the House and the Senate across this country campaigned on this issue, that we had to restore fiscal responsibility to our government. You heard from four members of the Blue Dog, freshmen members, who are brand-new here tonight. This is their first term as Members of Congress. They campaigned on this issue. They understand it. They understand the importance of it. Their constituents back home do.

Madam Speaker, our Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, our majority leader, STENY HOYER, our Ways and Means chairman, CHARLIE RANGEL, and our budget chairman, JOHN SPRATT, and other Democratic leaders, in addition to the Blue Dogs, vowed to put an end to the reckless fiscal policy that has existed in our government for the last 6 years. And under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HOYER, and with the help of the Blue Dogs, we put in place this PAYGO principle on the very first day when this new Congress took power in early January of this year.

That is what the American people wanted us to do. They wanted us to stop acting foolishly when it comes to fiscal management. We are like a board of directors, Madam Speaker, of a major corporation. It is our job to manage the resources, the fiscal financial resources, of this country in a prudent way for our stockholders, who are our people back home.

And we said we have to stop spending more than we take in. There are lots of tools that you can use, as has been said here earlier, but the one that we have in place right now, the one that we have been able to get in place, given

the current political environment, is this PAYGO rule, and we need to abide by it. We don't need to abandon it.

Congress without those tools in place has not exhibited the willpower, if you will, to make tough choices when it comes to spending or tax cuts. So that is why it is important that we have tools like PAYGO. If you don't have the ability, the will or the backbone to make choices about how we responsibly spend the taxpayers' money, then what are we doing here? This Congress, under the leadership, under the Democratic leadership of NANCY PELOSI and STENY HOYER has shown that it has the ability and the will and the backbone to be good stewards of the taxpayers' tax dollars that they send here for us to spend. Every single bill, Madam Speaker, that is passed by the House this year has complied with PAYGO rules. Whether it was the farm bill, SCHIP reauthorization, or AMT relief, every bill has complied with the PAYGO rules. And do you know what, Madam Speaker? Seventy-five percent of the pay-fors have been spending cuts and not revenue raisers.

Sadly, very sadly, the Senate last week failed in their duties as leaders of this country and as responsible stewards of our taxpayer dollars when they passed an AMT bill that was not paid for. The Senate was held hostage by the Republican caucus in the Senate and they blocked a House AMT bill that was paid for from even being heard on the Senate floor.

The Blue Dogs, Madam Speaker, and the House leadership are standing behind PAYGO for one simple reason: it is the right thing to do. It may not be the easy thing to do or the politically easy thing to do, but, Madam Speaker, I didn't take this job because I thought it was going to be easy. I took this job to do right by the people of the Second Congressional District of Florida and the American people.

The House of Representatives will again pass an AMT bill this week that is paid for. It is possible to do it. The Senate will have another opportunity to do what is right and responsible. And I strongly urge the Senate to have the gumption and the will and the good sense to keep the promise they made to the American people to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars and pass an AMT bill that does not violate the PAYGO rules and that is paid for.

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Again, I want to thank my fellow co-chair, MIKE ROSS from Arkansas, for his steady leadership on this issue and so many others, but also steady leadership in forming these Tuesday night Special Orders, in which we have had a chance to come talk to the American people about issues of much importance.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Florida, the administrative co-chair of the Blue Dogs, Mr. ALLEN BOYD from Florida's Second Congressional District, for being a part of this

Special Order this evening, as he is so many Tuesday evenings.

What we are talking about here, Madam Speaker, is the Republican Congress, the Republican administration, after having a balanced budget under President Clinton for the first time in 40 years, gave us the largest debt ever in our Nation's history, largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, and there has been a lot of talk about all this.

Mr. TANNER was talking earlier about how this administration has borrowed more money from foreigners than the previous 42 Presidents combined. That has to be paid back with interest. And to put it in perspective, the Federal Government has sent \$709 billion abroad in the form of interest payments since President Bush took office, and \$155 billion in 2007 alone. The same amount would fund any of the following: The amount of money this administration has sent to foreigners to pay interest on the debt that we have borrowed from them to fund tax cuts in this country for folks earning over \$400,000 a year. With the interest paid on this debt, this foreign debt, the amount of your tax money, Madam Speaker, that we have sent overseas, with that amount of money, we could have built 12,000 new elementary schools, 7,000 new veterans clinics, and I might remind you, Madam Speaker, we have a new generation of veterans coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq. And get this: We could have funded all road and bridge construction and improvements for 10 years.

It's about priorities, and it's time this Nation got its priorities in order. It's time we got our fiscal house in order. Make no mistake about it, Madam Speaker, for the second time this week we are going to send to the Senate an AMT fix that ensures that no, not one, additional taxpayer is liable for the AMT tax. Not one. Madam Speaker, we are paying for it, and as conservative Democrats we are reaching across the aisle and we are begging, we are begging Republicans to join us in doing the right thing and fixing this the right way.

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2082, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

Mr. CARDOZA (during the Special Order of Mr. ROSS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-487) on the resolution (H. Res. 859) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2082) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.